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INFO	LOG-00	COPY-01	ADS-00	AID-00	INR-10	SS-00	CIAE-00
	DODE-00	H-01	NSC-01	NSAE-00	HA-08	L-03	TRSE-00
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R 311756Z MAY 85
 FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5522
 INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
 AMEMBASSY CARACAS
 AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
 AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
 AMEMBASSY MEXICO
 AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
 AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
 USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PN
 USIA WASHDC 4774
 USAFSO HOWARD AFB PN//LAI

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
☒ Release () Excise () Deny ☒ Declassify
 Date 2/27/02 Exemption

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USIA FOR AR/CENTAM

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
 TAGS: PREL, PGOV, ES
 SUBJECT: CODEL DURENBERGER MEETING WITH PRESIDENT DUARTE

1. ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~--ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY

 PRESIDENT DUARTE AND SENATOR DURENBERGER, ACCOMPANIED
 BY AMBASSADOR PICKERING, HAD AN EXCEEDINGLY CORDIAL
 MEETING IN THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE MAY 30. THE DISCUSSION
 RANGED OVER DUARTE'S INTERNAL DIPLOMACY WITH THE

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SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES AND HIS CONVICTION THAT HE
 ENJOYS THEIR SUPPORT DESPITE THEIR FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND
 SOME OF THE TACTICS THAT HE EMPLOYS ON ISSUES SUCH AS
 DIALOGUE. DUARTE SAID HE THOUGHT THAT ONE REASON THE
 SALVADORAN LEFT IS TRYING TO IMPEDE THE DIALOGUE PROCESS
 IS TO EVADE THE RISK THAT IT BECOME A MODEL TO BE
 IMPOSED ON THE SANDINISTA REGIME WITH REGARD TO THEIR
 OWN OPPOSITION. DUARTE ALSO EXPOUNDED AT LENGTH ON HIS
 VIEW THAT THE US DOES NOT HAVE A CLEAR POLICY TOWARD
 NICARAGUA, IN THE ABSENCE OF WHICH THE USG IS IN A
 COMPLETELY REACTIVE POSTURE TOWARDS EVENTS. HE BELIEVED
 A CLEAR US OBJECTIVE NEEDED TO BE ARTICULATED,
 NICARAGUAN DEMOCRATIC LEADERS IDENTIFIED AS SUCH, AND

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A CONSENSUS DEVELOPED ON HOW TO STEER NICARAGUA TOWARD
A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. END SUMMARY.

3. DUARTE'S DOMESTIC SITUATION

DUARTE AND THE SENATOR AGREED THAT THINGS WERE MOVING FORWARD POSITIVELY IN EL SALVADOR. ONE DEMONSTRATION WAS THE HIGHLY POSITIVE TONE OF HIS MAY VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES, IN DRAMATIC CONTRAST WITH HIS FIRST TRIP IN 1980 WHEN HE WAS PRESIDENT OF THE JUNTA GOVERNMENT. HE HAD HAD A FULL AND SATISFYING VISIT; WHEREAS IN THE PAST HE HAD BEEN GREETED WITH ABUNDANT SKEPTICISM HE WAS NOW ACCORDED NEARLY UNIVERSAL DEMONSTRATIONS OF CONFIDENCE.

4. DIALOGUE

SENATOR DURENBERGER REMARKED ON THE COOPERATION BEING EXTENDED DUARTE BY THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES. THIS, HE NOTED, EXTENDED TO THE PROCESS OF DIALOGUE, AND HE

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DREW A CONNECTION WITH THE SITUATION IN NICARAGUA EXPRESSING THE CONVICTION THAT IT HAD TO BE RESOLVED BY A PROCESS OF DIALOGUE SIMILAR TO THE ONE WHICH PRESIDENT DUARTE HAD INITIATED.

5. PRESIDENT DUARTE REMARKED THAT THIS WAS ONE OBVIOUS REASON WHY THE SALVADORAN LEFT WAS ATTEMPTING TO SABOTAGE THE DIALOGUE WITH THE GOES. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE LEFT WAS SERIOUS AND NOTED THEIR EFFORTS TO PAINT HIM AS THE RECALCITRANT PARTY. DUARTE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE ESAF UNDERSTANDS HIS INTENTIONS IN THE DIALOGUE AND REMAINS FULLY SUPPORTIVE. ALTHOUGH NOT ALWAYS COMPLETELY UNDERSTANDING OF HIS TACTICS, DUARTE MAINTAINED, THE ESAF NOW HAS FAITH IN HIM. HIS CONTINUING MISSION IS TO REASON WITH THE ARMY SO THAT IT WILL HAVE NO DOUBTS OR MISUNDERSTANDINGS ON THE DIRECTION IN WHICH HE IS LEADING THE COUNTRY. HE DID NOT WISH TO PUSH THE ARMY FORWARD ON THE BASIS OF ORDERS--WHICH WOULD BE OBEYED--BUT ON THE BASIS OF BELIEF IN THE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES THAT THE SYSTEM NOW EMBODIED.

6. PDC AND PRIVATE SECTOR

THE SENATOR TURNED THE CONVERSATION TO RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PDC AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR, ASSERTING THAT THE ABILITY OF THE TWO TO COOPERATE IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE WOULD BE A VALUABLE MODEL FOR OTHER COUNTRIES. DUARTE RESPONDED THAT HE HAD MADE EFFORTS TO REACH OUT TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR, CITING BY WAY OF EXAMPLE HIS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR THE COFFEE GROWERS. HOWEVER, EVERY ONE OF HIS SUPPORTIVE MEASURES HAD BEEN CONDEMNED BY THE LEADERS OF THE COFFEE GROWERS ASSOCIATION.

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DUARTE COMMENTED THAT THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM WAS THE LACK OF A DEMOCRATIC TRADITION IN EL SALVADOR WHEREBY EVERYONE UNDERSTOOD THE RULES OF A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND OPERATED ON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL RESPECT. THE PRESENT DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM, HOWEVER, WAS GRADUALLY MAKING PEOPLE RETHINK AND REVISE THEIR MENTALITY. HE BELIEVED IN THE POSSIBILITY OF PDC COOPERATION WITH THE PRIVATE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO

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MEET AND REASON TOGETHER.

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7. NICARAGUA

SENATOR DURENBERGER PROVIDED DUARTE WITH SUBSTANTIAL BACKGROUND ON PRESIDENT REAGAN'S EFFORT TO GAIN THE SUPPORT OF CONGRESS ON ASSISTANCE TO THE CONTRAS IN NICARAGUA AND OUTLINED THE ADMINISTRATION'S PLAN TO RETURN TO THE CONGRESS WITH A NEW RESOLUTION IN THE DAYS AHEAD. THE SENATOR ASKED DUARTE FOR HIS VIEWS ON THE DIRECTION THAT US POLICY TOWARD NICARAGUA SHOULD TAKE.

8. DUARTE BEGAN BY NOTING THAT EL SALVADOR IS FUNDAMENTALLY IN HARMONY WITH THE US ANALYSIS OF THE NICARAGUAN SITUATION ALTHOUGH NOT ITSELF INVOLVED. HE THEN OFFERED HIS PERSONAL, HONEST ANALYSIS THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN'S DEFEAT IN THE CONGRESS CREATED THE APPEARANCE THAT THE US WAS WITHOUT A NICARAGUAN OR CENTRAL AMERICAN POLICY. IN HIS VIEW, THE ADMINISTRATION WAS MERELY REACTING TO EVENTS, AND HE CITED US ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AS AN EXAMPLE OF THIS REACTIVE MODE. IN THE ABSENCE OF A CLEAR CUT US POLICY, THE REST OF THE WORLD, INCLUDING THE NICARAGUAN REGIME, WERE DEFINING US POLICY IN THEIR OWN TERMS. NICARAGUA HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO FIND A SCAPEGOAT FOR ALL ITS PROBLEMS AND TO HARP ON THE THEME THAT THE US WAS PREPARING TO INVADE. DUARTE PERCEIVED THIS CONCEPT TO BE PERMEATING THE CONTADORA PROCESS AND EVEN EUROPEAN VIEWS ON THE CENTRAL AMERICAN SITUATION. IN FACT, HE SAID, THE US WAS LETTING ITSELF BE USED. DANIEL ORTEGA, DUARTE NOTED, HAD SAID THAT NICARAGUA WAS EXPLOITING US DEMOCRATIC PARTY MEMBERS AND LIBERALS TO FEED BACK SANDINISTA VIEWS

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INTO US PUBLIC OPINION. THE PUBLIC US DEBATE WAS EVEN HELPING TO DAMAGE US INTELLIGENCE SERVICES THROUGH OPEN DISCUSSION OF THEIR ACTIVITIES.

9. DUARTE SAID HE HAD TRIED TO TELL FRIENDS IN DURING HIS RECENT VISIT THAT THEY MUST JOIN IN REDEFINING THEIR OBJECTIVES TOWARDS NICARAGUA AND CREATE A BIPARTISAN POLICY ON THE BASIS OF CLEAR CUT GOALS. THE US, HE SAID, HAD TO DECIDE WHAT IT WAS TRYING TO ACHIEVE. WAS IT, HE ASKED, TO HALT THE SPREAD OF REVOLUTION BY THE SANDINISTAS, OR TO OVERTHROW THEIR GOVERNMENT? HAD THE US CLEARLY DEFINED WHO THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION TO THE SANDINISTAS REALLY WAS: BERMUDEZ, CALERO, ROBELO? DUARTE EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT THE US SHOULD BE, IN FACT, FURNISHING ASSISTANCE TO INTERNAL DEMOCRATIC FORCES IN NICARAGUA, SUCH AS

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"LA PRENSA" OR NICARAGUAN PRIVATE ENTERPRISE. PRESSURE FROM THE OUTSIDE ALONE, SUCH AS THROUGH THE CONTRAS, ONLY GAVE THE SANDINISTAS THE EXCUSE TO BLAME THEIR PROBLEMS ON "IMPERIALISM", TO STRENGTHEN THEIR INTERNAL ORGANIZATION, AND TO MARSHALL DOMESTIC OPINION. IN HIS VIEW, DUARTE SAID, THE ANSWER WAS TO CONFRONT THE SANDINISTAS WITH A TRUE DEMOCRATIC FRONT IN NICARAGUA JUST AS SALVADORAN DEMOCRATS HAD CONFRONTED AND FACED DOWN THE LEFT IN EL SALVADOR. IF THE US HAD A CLEAR IDEA ON HOW TO HELP STEER NICARAGUA TOWARD A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS, DUARTE SAID, IT WOULD ACQUIRE FLEXIBILITY THAT COULD EXTEND EVEN TO THE SUPPLY OF ARMS TO THE CONTRAS. WITHOUT SUCH A CONCEPT, US POLICY REMAINED WITHOUT DIRECTION.

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10. SIMILARLY, DUARTE SAID, UNLESS A LEADERSHIP FOR NICARAGUA COULD BE IDENTIFIED, THERE COULD BE NO SOLUTION. HE HAD ADVISED CRUZ TO RETURN.

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IN THE NICARAGUA PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. HOWEVER
CRUZ HAD NOT WANTED TO RUN ANY RISKS, MUCH AS GUILL
UNGO WANTED TO HAVE POWER SERVED UP TO HIM IN EL SALVADOR
WITHOUT THE RISK OF COMPETING FOR IT ELECTORALLY.
DUARTE SAID HE HAD SIMILARLY TOLD CALERO THAT, AS A
DEMOCRAT, HE SHOULD REVISE HIS ASSOCIATIONS AND
CONSTITUTE A REAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT.

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PICKERING

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